

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 ARA-11 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 L-03 CG-00
DOTE-00 DLOS-09 COME-00 EB-08 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 /073 W
-----082503 112325Z /66

O 110320Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7910

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

CINCPACREP GUAM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SUVA 1724

CINCPAC FOR POLAD, CINCPACREP GUAM PASS STATUS LNO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, FJ

SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES ORGANIZATION

REF: A)USUN 3526; B) SUVA 1716; C) STATE 227133

1. I SAW JIOJI KOTOBALAVUU, SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT 8:30 A.M. THIS MORNING AND HAD NO PROBLEM BRINGING THE DISCUSSION TO THE SPRFO QUESTION. HE ALMOST WELCOMED IT BECAUSE HE HAD BRIEFED THE PM LAST FRIDAY IN ANTICIPATION OF THE WEEK-END VISIT OF MR. HAMMER DEBROBURT, THE NAURU PRIME MINISTER. THE PICTURE THAT EMERGED FROM THIS MORNING'S MEETING IS EVEN GLOOMIER THAN WAS INDICATED IN REFTEL BASED ON PROSPECT OF FUI PROPOSING A SERIES OF AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT CONVENTION.
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2. IT SEEMS NOW THAT GO, WHICH REALLY MEANS, RATU MARA, IS RAISING MORE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER THE SPRFO AS CONCEIVED IN THE DRAFT CONVENTION WILL SERVE FIJI'S SHORT AND LONG TERM INTERESTS AND AT WHAT COST INCLUDING DISREGARD FOR EXISTING ALTERNATIVES TO SPRFO.

3. JIOJI SAID THAT THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE AGENCY, NAMELY TO FACILITATE COLLECTIVE SURVEILLANCE OF ISLANDS'S 200 MILE EZ (MULDOON/NATU MARA CONVERSATION REPORTED IN REF. B),) IS CLEARLY NOT ATTAINABLE THROUGH DRAFT CONVENTION. THE PURPOSES NOW ENVISAGED IN THE DRAFT CONVENTION CAN PROBABLY BE SERVED THROUGH BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND THROUGH RELIANCE, AS FAR AS RESEARCH IS CONCERNED, ON INSTITUTIONS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE SUCH AS THE MARINE INSTITUTE IN SPC, THE MARINE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC AND, FOR THAT MATTER, A SIMILAR MARINE INSTITUTE IN MANILA.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER, SAID JOJI, IS VERY ALLERGIC TO PROLIFERATION OF INSTITUTIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS WHICH SEEM TO BE PURSUING THE SAME PURPOSE NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE IMPLIED DUPLICATION OF EFFORT BUT BECAUSE OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN THAT IT CREATES FOR PARTICIPANT MEMBERS WITH LIMITED RESOURCES SUCH AS FIJI. THIS IS A THEME TO WHICH JOJI RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES AND WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED. THE MESSAGE WAS CLEAR THAT RATU MARA IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE COST EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS INCLUDING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTENDS TO KEEP IN SHARP FOCUS FIJI'S POTENTIAL BENEFITS FROM SUCH AGREEMENTS.

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5 WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT THE TIME TO ASK THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD HAVE BEEN AS EARLY AS LAST NOVEMBER, JIOJI CONCEDED THE POINT BUT SAID QUICKLY THAT WHAT HAPPENED IN NOVEMBER AND IN JUNE WAS THAT THE LAWYERS AND TECHNICANS RAN AWAY WITH THE BALL AND LOST SIGHT OF THE PURPOSE WHICH THE FORUM LEADERS HAS INTENDED TO BE SERVED BY SPRFO.

6. TO MY SUGGESTION THAT A CONSENSUS SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED IN THE AREA ON ACCEPTANCE OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION AS A WORK-ABLE COMPROMISE, HE REPLIED THAT THIS MAY NOT BE QUITE SO BECAUSE NONE OF THE ISLANDS HAVE COME OUT FLAT IN EXPRESSING READINESS TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT. THE ONLY COUNTRIES TO HAVE DONE SO ARE AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, UK AND U.S.

7. JIOJI SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR. DEROBURT UNDOUBTEDLY EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE SPRFO AND THE PRIME MINISTER
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WILL BE DOING LIKEWISE WITH PNG PRIME MINISTER SOMARE WHO IS EXPECTED IN SUVA NEXT WEDNESDAY AS PERSONAL GUEST OF RATU MARA BEFORE THEY DEPART TOGETHER FOR NIU SATURDAY THE 16TH. JIOJI INSISTED THAT SOMARE'S VISIT HAD BEEN PLANNED SOMETIME AGO AND WAS NOT PROVOKED BY RATU MARA'S SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE WHOLE IDEA OF SPRFO.

8. JIJIO RESISTED EFFORTS TO DRAW HIM OUT OF SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS OR "IMPROVEMENTS" AS HE PUT IT THAT FIJI INTENDS TO PRESENT IN NIUE POSSIBLY BECAUSE THERE WERE OVERTAKEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S DETERMINATION TO RAISE MORE FUNDEAMENTAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT. HE DID COMMENT, HOWEVER, ON THE QUESTION OF DEPENDENT TERRITORIES BECOMING SIGNATORIES OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION BY POINTING OUT THE APPARENT INCONSISTENCY IN THE FRENCH ATTITUDE, I.E. WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW SIGNATURE BY DEPENDENT TERRITORIES OF SPRFO BUT RESISTANCE TO THEIR SIGNING THE SPC CANBERRA CONVENTION.

9. RATU MARA IS A STUBBORN MAN WHEN IT COMES TO QUESTIONS TO WHICH HE HAS GIVEN SOME THOUGHT. HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH RATIONAL USE OF FIJI'S LIMITED RESOURCES IS REAL. HE HAS GONE SO FAR AS EVEN TO DENY OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE IF HE SEES THAT SUCH AID WILL GENERATE AS A BYPRODUCT AN UNACCEPTABLE COMMITMENT OF FIJI RESOURCES. IN LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING, THE NIUE MEETING IS LIKELY TO TURN OUT MORE LIVELY AND MORE IMPORTANT THAN HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED.

10. IN OUR OPINION SOMARE SHOULD BE ALERTED IF HE IS NOT ALREADY INFORMED TO THE TYPE OF REVIEW OF SPRFO THAT RATU MARA WILL BE ADVOCATING AND INDEED UNDERTAKING. SINCE WE

UNDERSTAND SOMOARE HAS ALREADY DEPARTED PORT MORESBY, I
COULD DISCUSS FOREGOING WITH PNG HIGH COMMISSIONER HERE IF
DEPT FINDS SUCH ADVISABLE.
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